

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SUBJECT: FURTHER CONSEQUENCES AS EMERGENCY LAPSES

REF: COLOMBO 560

1. FURTHER CONSEQUENCES OF THE ENDING OF THE SIX-YEAR OLD STATE OF EMERGENCY ARE BECOMING APPARENT. BESIDES THE LIFTING OF THE BAN ON THE SUN PRESS GROUP AND THE RELEASE OF TWENTY-ODD PRISONERS HELD WITHOUT CHARGES BEING FILED (REFTEL), IT NOW APPEARS THAT FOUR PROSCRIBED RADICAL ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE FREED FROM ANY RESTRICTIONS WHEN THE EMERGENCY EXPIRES AT MIDNIGHT FEBRUARY 15. THEY ARE THE PERADIGA SULANG KALLIYA (EAST WIND GROUP), KALUPAHANA (BLACK LAMP), LANKA VIPLAVAKARI THARUNA SANVIDANAYA (LANKA REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ORGANIZATION), AND THE JANATA VIMUKTI PERAMUNA (FVP--POPULAR LIBERATION FRONT). THE JVP SPEARHEADED THE 1971 INSURGENCY, AND WAS PROSCRIBED IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARD; THE THREE OTHERS WERE BANNED IN 1974 AS SUSPECTED NEO-INSURGENT GROUPS. WE DO NOT KNOW IF ANY OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS WILL REFORM, AS PRESSURE GROUPS OR ELECTORAL PARTIES. HOWEVER, ONE JVP VETERAN LAST WEEK ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF A POLITICAL PARTY TO ATTRACT RELEASED INSURGENTS

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(REFTEL).

2. IN ANOTHER CONSEQUENCE OF THE END OF THE EMERGENCY, THE PRESS SPECULATED THAT THE SIX-DAY WORK WEEK, SUSPENDED UNDER THE EMERGENCY AS A FUEL CONSERVATION MEASURE, WOULD HAVE TO BE REINSTATED, ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT BE AVOIDED BY A GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION.

3. RATHER THAN HOLD LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS BEFORE GENERAL ELECTIONS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO TRY TO EXTEND BY MINISTERIAL DECREE THE TERMS OF THE OFFICE OF ALL MUNICIPAL AND VILLAGE COUNCILS UNTIL MARCH 1978. WHETHER THIS IS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT'S POWER WITHOUT EMERGENCY REGULATIONS MAY BE DISPUTED.

4. ANOTHER LEGACY OF THE EMERGENCY WILL APPARENTLY LAST BEYOND ITS EXPIRATION. THE HIGH COURT-AT-BAR SET UP TO TRY THE ALLEGED ASSASSINS OF THE JAFFNA MAYOR WILL REPORTEDLY BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE, EVEN THOUGH THE TRIAL HAS NOT STARTED, SINCE THE JUDGES HAVE ALREADY BEEN SELECTED. PRELIMINARY SUBMISSIONS HAVE BEGUN IN THAT CASE, CHALLENGING THE AUTHORITY OF THE HIGH COURT PANEL TO HEAR THE CASE WITHOUT A JURY; DEFENSE ATTORNEYS MAY NOW ADD THE END OF THE EMERGENCY AS A FURTHER DISQUALIFICATION. THE PROSECUTION, REPORTEDLY NOT VERY STRONG, MIGHT ULTIMATELY BE DROPPED IN CONNECTION WITH EFFORTS OF THE SLFP FOR A PRE-ELECTION ARRANGEMENT WITH THE TMIL COMMUNITY AND ITS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.
REED

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